1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

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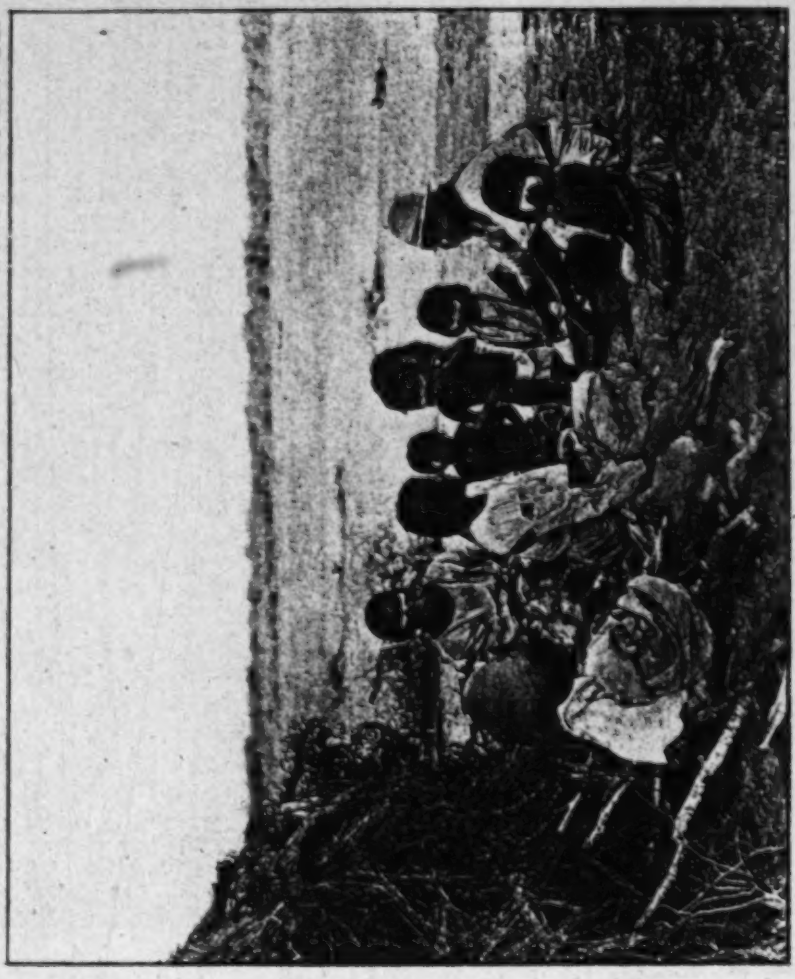

SERI FAMILY GROUP

SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT PL. XIV

BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY

[FACING P. 139]

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

blocks or metates, though it is manifest that most of the camps were fireless and many fireless. It is particularly noteworthy that even the more temporary resting-places are seldom if ever less than a mile or two from the nearest fresh water. In short, the Seri are not a domiciliary folk, but rather homeless wanderers, customarily roving from place to place, frequently if not commonly sleeping where overtaken by exhaustion or storm, ordinarily slumbering through a part of the day and watching by night, habitually avoiding fresh waters save in hurried and stealthy visits, and apparently gathering in their flimsy huts only on special occasions. 361 [312]

In conformity with their rovingness the Seri are notable burden-bearers. They habitually carry their entire stock of personal belongings (arms, implements, utensils, and bedding), as well as their stock of food and—weightiest burden of all—the water requisite for prolonged sustenance amid scorching deserts, in all their wanderings, the water being borne chiefly by women, in ollas, either balanced on the head singly or slung in pairs on rude yokes like those of Chinese coolies. And they have never grasped the idea of imposing their burdens on their bestial associates; their coyote-curs are not harnessed or even led; when they surround and capture horses, burros, and kine they make no use of ropes, never think of mounting even when pursued by vaqueros, but immediately break the necks or club out the brains of the beasts, perchance to tear the writhing body into quarters and flee for their lives with the reeking flesh still quivering on their sturdy heads and brawny shoulders—and scores of vaqueros agree in the affirmation (wholly incredible as it would be if supported by fewer witnesses) that even when so burdened the Seri skim the sand wastes of Desierto Encinas more rapidly than avenging horsemen can follow. 482 [231] 224 177 [481]

The hardly conceivable fleetness of the Seri is conformable with their habitual rovingness and their ability as burden-bearers; and this faculty is established by cumulative evidence so voluminous and consistent as to outweigh the presumption arising from the standards attained among other peoples. A few minutes after they were photographed, the group of boys shown in plate XVI, with several others of about the same size, provided themselves with a stock of their favorite human-hair cords, "rounded up" a dozen mongrel coyote-dogs haunting the rancheria at Costa Rica, and herded the unwilling animals toward a shrubbery-free space a quarter of a mile away, in order to rope them in imitation of the work of the Mexican cowboys earlier in the morning. From time to time as they went a frightened cur sneaked or broke through the cordon of boys, and made for distant shrub-tufts at top speed; yet in every case a boy darted from the ring, headed off the animal within one or two hundred yards, and lashed it back to its place. On arriving at their miniature rodeo the boys widened their ring, and at a signal scattered and frightened the dogs; then, when the fleeing animals had a fair start, each selected his victim and fol- 177 231 481 857

1; McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

857 481 [177] [231]

lowed it, yelling and swinging his light lasso, until, after much doubling and dodging and many unsuccessful casts, he caught and dragged the howling beast back to the open; and it was only after half a dozen repetitions that enough dogs had escaped to spoil the sport. As the boys lounged chattering back toward the rancheria their course lay between two clumps of the usual desert shrubbery, so placed that when the first was obliquely left and 40 or 50 feet distant from them, the other was obliquely right and 100 feet away. At this point a bevy of small birds (perhaps blackbirds—at any rate corresponding to blackbirds in size and flight) fluttered suddenly out of the nearer clump toward the more distant one, when, too instantaneously for the untrained eye to catch exchange of signal or beginning of movement, the boys lunged forward in a common effort to seize the birds; and though none were entirely successful, one exultantly displayed a tuft of feathers clutched by his fingers as the bird darted into and through the thorny harbor. When the distances were paced it was found that, although the birds had the advantage of the start, the boys covered at least 90 per cent of their distance in the same time; while the spontaneity of the impulse demonstrated habitual chase of flying game under fit conditions.

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While obtaining the Seri vocabulary with Mashém's aid, advantage was taken of every opportunity to secure collateral information concerning the actual use of the terms, and thereby of gaining insight into the tribal habits. Through his naïve explanations, usually repeated and corroborated by the elderwoman of the Turtle clan (Juana María) and others of the tribe, it was learned that half-grown Seri boys are fond of hunting hares (jack-rabbits); that they usually go out for this purpose in threes or fours; that when a hare is started they scatter, one following it slowly while the others set off obliquely in such manner as to head it off and keep it in a zigzag or doubling course until it tires; and that they then close in and take the animal in their hands, frequently bringing it in alive to show that it was fairly caught—for it is deemed discreditable, if not actually wrong, to take game animals without giving them opportunity for escape or defense by exercise of their natural powers. Similarly, Mashém described the chase of the bura and other deer as ordinarily conducted by five persons (of whom one or two may be youths), who scatter at sight of the quarry, gradually surround it, bewilder it by confronting it at all points, and finally close in either to seize it with their hands, or perhaps to brain it with a stone or short club; the former being held the proper way and the latter a partial failure. This hunting custom, described as a commonplace by Mashém, is established by the vaqueros who had frequently witnessed it from a distance; and the same extra-tribal observers described still more striking feats of individual Seri hunters: Don Manuel, son of Señor Encinas, and Don Ygnacio Lozania were endeavoring to train to work a robust Seri (one of a band sojourning temporarily at Costa

2: Kroeber E-5 (1930) 1931 NU31 Seri NU31

sounds like an expectable enough mythic idea, but seems involved with McGee's dubious conceptions as to totemism, discussed below.

The two-pointed fish-spear, with serrated points 6 inches long and spreading 5°, seen by Hardy (McGee, p. 193), is interesting because seemingly unreported in or near the area.

"Fishing" with staked pelicans who are then fed by free birds, is authenticated by the statement of Venegas for lower California, (McGee, p. 193).

No fish nets, hooks, or lines were seen by McGee among the abandoned effects on Tiburon (p. 194). This is in accord with my observation. The abundance of sharks may interfere with net or deep water fishing.

The bow (p. 200) is of *palo blanco;* the release (pls. 28, 29), Mediterranean; the archer's position (pl. 29), with elbow above head, suggests a quick downward shot at a target or game lying on the ground not far away.

Mesquite, according to McGee (p. 207), is ground on the metate. Sr. Thomson told me of its being pounded in a hole in the ground. The Seri gave me the name a'kaia for what I understood to be this earth mortar. According to Sr. Thomson's description, the flour from the first beans cakes and lines the cavity firmly, so that the bulk of the material is secured quite cleanly. In general, mesquite is mortar-pounded rather than metate-ground by the tribes from whom we have records, as is expectable from the woody nature of the beans.

McGee (p. 207) noted the viznaga cactus, Echinocistus, as rare in the Seri habitat, presumably owing to its use for water by the natives. I made the same observation on the mainland, but Sr. Thomson stated that along the roads the plant is being gathered for candying.

The one basket described by McGee (p. 208, fig. 24) is bundle-coiled and plain. The only one I saw in use among the Seri was ornamented with a plain reddish band. Sr. Thomson presented me with two which bear patterns (fig. 13), and showed me a photograph of a collection made by Mr. Davis for the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, nearly all of which were decorated, some fairly elaborately. Several of these are shown by courtesy of that institution in figure 12. As McGee observes, there is obvious resemblance to Southwestern baskets; especially of the Papago, Pima, and Apache. Southern California basketry is less similar. That of Baja California is unknown from specimens, though the mention of water-tight vessels used for winnowing and parching suggests a coiled tray of Seri type. The surviving tribes of Sonora other than the Seri use few baskets distinguishable from those of the non-Indian population.

3:Davis & Dawson E-5 (1922-1940) 1945
NUSI Seri NUSI

[142]
[294]
[482]
[854]

[231]
[853]

FIG. 12. SERI MOTHER AND BABE
SERI MOTHERS COMMONLY HAVE TOO MUCH MILK AND FREQUENTLY RELIEVE THEMSELVES BY SUCKLING AN ORPHANED PUPPY OR SOMETIMES EVEN A BABY PIG.

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ing, and were carried in cane tubes. The paints were carefully prepared, applied, and preserved, and, as indispensable feminine accompaniments even on the longest journeys, were among the most highly prized of the people's possessions. The importance of the face-painting custom, established in the old tribal life, remained strong even as the slaughter of the warring tribe progressed

302
614

[p. 201(B)]

178 of sea lion oil and powdered cactus skeleton,
396 was launched. It was the largest craft they had ever possessed and came to be called the "battleship," for its size.

114 After having established firm friendship with the tribe in 1922, it was possible two
221 years later to carry out an extensive plan to learn the habits of the Seris by living among them, sharing their comradeship along with their privations. At this time they still had no homes that could even be called semi-permanent. Moving here and there in response to fluctuations of their precarious food supply, household things were not accumulated, and life continued to be reduced to its very simplest elements and absolute necessities. Baskets made of fiber from the torote tree, some tin cooking and water ves-
[415] sels (the handmade olla was seldom any longer made), some patched and filthy rags which served as blankets to the fortunate few, constituted the family possessions (Fig. 15). Starved, bony family dogs were abun-
● 231 dant, as always, every Indian having one or two (Fig. 16). Each day they could be seen gnawing on some old fish head long since

[p. 264 (B)]
[Text continues on p. 265 (N)]

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FIG. 16. FAMILY DOGS ARE OFTEN MORE NUMEROUS THAN THE PEOPLE
HERE A GROUP OF SEVEN SERIS IN THE VILLAGE NEAR KINO KEEPS TEN OR MORE OF THE MONGREL CANINES.

[p. 264(C)]

3:Davis & Dawson E-5 (1923-1940) 1945
NU31 Seri NU31

[342]
[415]
[732]

FIG. 17. SERI BLIND MAN
BEING LED BY A BOY. NOTE THE CRUDE SHELTER OF POLES AND BRUSH SERVING AS AN AIRY DWELLING.

231 destitute of nourishment, tough and strong as rawhide; but hope springs eternal in an Indian dog's stomach, and again and again he will search out and mouth the same old pelican bone or fish head, discouraged never. The dogs, beside keeping the camp clean, lick all the cooking utensils when they are not tended, and also are allowed to lick clean the infants after they have performed their natural defecations. A Seri girl was seen placing [312] a small can of water for a dog to drink from, afterward drinking some of the remainder herself and then pouring the rest back into the family five-gallon can.

732 734 Although the conditions of existence for the Seris had from time immemorial been too precarious to permit of anyone living who was unable by physical disability to hunt or fish to get his meat, there were two or three men, blind or nearly so, whose wives got an uncertain living for them by the hardest struggle (Fig. 17). If a Seri, however, became ill of a disease which the tribe feared, he was often taken into the desert and left with a little food and water, either to get well and return or to perish.

[P. 265(A)]

262 important source of meat for the Seris, and sea-gulls are occasionally killed and likewise abandoned, except when famine threatens. The above examples most likely apply to other varieties of animals as well.

No specific food taboos were discovered in the course of field work except the unexplained reluctance to eat certain species. McGee (1898) reports a taboo on eating sea-lions but my informants asserted that these mammals were hunted in the past for both their flesh and hide. All of my informants denied that the Seris eat cougars, and this abhorrance has been confirmed by the Mexicans. Yet the Mexicans themselves do hunt and eat these big cats. McGee
225 (1898:196, 202) again casually mentions cougars and jaguars as being hunted by by the Indians but gives no evidence for this. It should be mentioned that only a few Seris know what sort of an animal the jaguar is, and these know it only from hearsay as "huge animal inhabiting the mountains far in the interior". There are occasionally some migrant jaguars in Seri territory.

Pets

231 The Seris have only a limited variety of pets. Dogs are very numerous, each family keeping many of them. Although they maintain that the dogs are acquired in order to keep the coyotes away from the camps, there is nothing in their camps that a coyote would want to steal. There are a few cats and several species of wild desert doves which are often caged. Wild animals in captivity are, as a rule, those which accidentally come into the hands of the Indians. On one occasion a badger was kept tied to a house post for a couple of weeks and fed on fish heads, snakes, lizards and water until one night when it made its escape,

257 Of the insects, only the singing male Cicadas are captured by the roving Seri boys. These are tied to a long thread and having their fore-wings partly clipped, they are released into the air like kites. Local Mexicans also provide a similar kind of toy for their children.

Classification of Animals

215 Seri taxonomic notions of the animal world are vague and indistinct. No conscious classification exists and perhaps none should be expected of non-literate people. But there is a random association of animals based on the external similarities of form, habits and habitat. A clear distinction is made between plants and animals. Quite obscure animals, for example, the Echinoderms, Holothurians, Coelenterates or barnacles, are classed as animals and not as plants. It seems that voluntary movement is used here to distinguish the two categories. Thus, informants insisted that sea-anemones and jelly-fish are animals and not plants. One difficulty arises in the case of sessile barnacles. It is hard to account why those growing on the sea-turtles are classified as animals and are called "turtle fleas".

In the assemblage of major animals, the mammals form one group and birds and fish others. Since general similarity of form and not real structural affinities are the primary reason for these associations, the bats "are not birds, but are probably mammals because they have fur". Thus, sharks and

5:Dawson N-5 (1940) 1944 NU31 Seri NU31

ingenuity of a modern shipbuilder to have constructed a boat. These simple, desert people, however, through centuries of struggle for life in their desolate realm had learned to use every natural material available to them, however laborious the tasks and inefficient the products. The carrizal reed, *Phragmites communis*, grows about the few permanent water holes of Seriland, and from countless numbers of these slender, buoyant canes they built their watercraft. The reeds were stripped of leaves and gathered in long bundles, bound together and gradually augmented by more and more interlaced canes until a bundle 18 to 30 feet long and 1½ feet in diameter, tapering at both ends, was made. Three of these were then bound together with cords of fiber or human hair, making a maneuverable one or two man raft, easily transported to the shores.

The mesquite tree, *Prosopis juliflora*, provided fiber for cords. The flexible outer tissues of the roots were stripped off, soaked and progressively pounded, split and worked between hand and mouth until very slender, fibrous threads were obtained which were then twisted into cords. In some cases a coarse, rough fabric was woven from these fibers, but most garments were made of pelican skins. The strips of workable mesquite root or sometimes yucca fiber were also used in making doughnut-shaped head pads which aided in balancing the capacitous earthen water jars as they were carried on the heads of the women over rough and stony trails from water hole to camp site.

While occupying the turtle fishing camps on El Infiernillo during the good season, vegetable supplements to the fishy diet were few. Every nourishing seed or woody fruit yielded by the desert was carefully gathered; even the tiny seeds of the sea grass, *Ruppia*, were sorted from beach drift and made into meal. Never did the Seris learn to cultivate any crop or domesticate any animals other than the half wild coyote dogs that lived in mutual toleration with them. Even had they done so, their success in the barren, waterless land would have been small.

Sterile as is the Seri's hinterland, for a time each summer the thorny plants with which it is so profusely stocked ripen an abundant crop of fruit. The cacti in particular yield a wonderful harvest of luscious and succulent fruits, and toward this fortuitous supply the Seris were accustomed to move in June and July. The foothills of Sierra Seri on the mainland are adorned with great numbers of giant cacti, *Pachycereus Pringlei*, *Carnegiea gigantea* and *Lemaireocereus Thurberi* from which the luscious pitahayas were readily knocked down when ripe. The Indians wandered into the cactus forest and after a simple ritual marking the beginning of the feast, proceeded to gorge themselves for weeks on the succulent fruit until waning supply and cloying appetite drove them back to more severe food-getting activity by the sea. They did not customarily find it necessary to leave the cactus forest, however, as soon as the supply of fruits was no longer sufficient, for by the time the fruiting season was ended they had provided themselves with a second harvest. The pitahayas, gorged in such tremendous quantity throughout the season, were very imperfectly digested; the miriads of hard seeds, particularly, passed through the system unchanged and with the preservation of these in mind the Indians carefully collected with the aid of large sea shells all such seedy discharges and let them dry in the desert sun. Thus, as the supply of fresh fruit faded they proceeded to the use of this hoard

In general, the Seris have a healthy appearance; the most frequent complaints are gastro-intestinal and visual defects due to avitaminosis. It is very possible that given the difficult living conditions resulting from the desert environment, a rigorous selective process among the newborn takes place so that only those who possess exceptional physical qualities survive. This explains why the majority of them retain the physical characteristics described by Hardy more than a century ago: "the Indians of Isla Tiburón are tall, healthy and well built". 164 147 142

In spite of attempts at education, the Seris do not practice the elemental rules of hygiene; their way of life, neglecting this aspect, contributes to increase the unhealthy foci which exist in the places where they have established themselves. 515 751

Dwellings.—The Seris retain many vestiges of their nomadic life, among them the hut which serves as their living quarters; many of them are simple provisional arrangements for sheltering themselves from wind and sun, and they bear no relationship to the stability and durability of our dwellings. The Seri hut was made to meet the necessities of a nomadic people who had no reason to spend much time nor work on making a dwelling which would only be used for a season (one, two or at the most three months). Nevertheless, some innovations have been introduced in the last 20 years, so that we must distinguish between two types of houses. The primitive model consists of a series of scrub pine arches interwoven with branches from the same shrub almost totally covered by foliage, tortoise shells, *zacate*, etc., with only a small hole in one of its ends as an entrance (this type of hut is the same that McGee saw in 1894 when the Seris still led a nomadic life). 342 [221] [177]

In the new model more resistent woods are used, like *sahueso*, *torote*, etc., and poles, between which is laid a layer mud. The house is rectangular, without windows; with only one entrance, but always larger than the entrance to the brush hut. Other models would have to be added to these two, due to the incorporation and utilization of tents made in the United States which some U. S. tourists or the Society of Friends have given them. The tent is used as permanent living quarters; or sometimes combined with branches to cover the primitive type huts. 342 178 [177]

Domestic Animals.—The Seris are very fond of domestic animals like the dog, cat, and finally, the chicken. For all practical purposes these animals live together with the family; they rest on the piles of rags and sand which serve the Indians as beds; lick the plates and cooking utensils; dirty the house; increase the household fauna with their fleas and other vermin thus contributing to create and unhealthy atmosphere in the home. 231 [136]

Problems of Intoxication.—Their dealings with the fish buyers, in whose stores are sold beer, mezcal and tequila, has turned them to the consumption of these drinks. The Seri drinks liquor in an uncontrolled 273 [275]

9:Malkin E-5 (1953-1955)1962 NU31 Seri NU31

III

MAMMALS

Scientific	Common Name
Antrozous pallidus	Pallid bat
Bassariscus astutus	Ringtail cat (Cacomistle)
Spilogale gracilis	Spotted skunk
Taxidea taxus	Badger
Urocyon cinereoargenteus or *Vulpes macrotis*	Grey fox or kit fox
Canis latrans	Coyote
Felis concolor	Mountain Lion.
Felis onca	Jaguar
Felis cyra	Juguarundi
Zalophus californianus	California sea lion
Dipodomys sp.?	Kangaroo rat
Erethizon dorsatum	Porcupine
Lepus californicus	Blacktailed rabbit
Sylvilagus auduobonii	Desert cottontail
Pecari angulatus	Peccary
Odocoileus hemionus	Mule Deer
Ovis canadensis	Bighorn
Eschrichtius glaucus	California grey whale
Orcinus rectipinna	Killer whale
Tursiops gillii	Bottlenosed dolphin

Identification here has been obtained largely with an aid of field guides or by mentioning a colloquial local name of the mammal in Spanish. All these were later checked by Dr. Robert T. Orr of the California Academy of Sciences. While there is no doubt of the identity of the most common forms, such as peccary or sea-lion, there are also several of the identifications which can't be certain either because of inadequate line drawings or lack of specimens, either alive at a distance or even parts of them. In this somewhat dubious category are Ringtail cat, Jaguarundi and the Killer whale.

On the other hand, there is no doubt as to the identity of the following: Pacific pale bat, badger, bighorn, coyote, kangaroo rat, blacktail rabbit, cottontail jackrabbit, deer and dolphin. Live, free or captive individuals, or part of them, such as horns, hide or skulls were available.

Economic Uses

Food: Only 6 out of 21 species for which information is available are used today as food. Three more were mentioned as "eaten in the past" and one more as "possibly eaten in the past." Since the oldest of the informants who provided this data, Miguel Barnett, is a man in his fifties (and it is he who talked most often about the animals "eaten in the past but not now") we may surmise that these were part of the Seri diet 25-45 years ago, that is between 1910-1930.

Five species are important as a supplementary source of food: the bighorn, the deer, peccary and both species of rabbits. Some, the deer especially, are considered to be delicacies. The sixth species is the badger but it appears neither important nor frequently killed. I saw one badger captured by José Juan Moreno. The animal was tied to the pole, and kept as a pet, fed on fish, snake and

9:Malkin E-5 (1953-1955)1962 NU31 Seri NU31

III

MAMMALS

262 water for a week until it escaped. There was
[231] no intent to do away with it and serve it up for dinner later on.

The 3 species reported as eaten in the past are kangaroo rat, sea lion and the ringtail cat or
[252] cácomistle. Of these the little rodent had been supposedly "boiled in hot water with salt" which
[261] method of preparation may indicate that it happens quite recently yet. It is quite possible that in times of famine this animal is still used. The sea
[432] lion has been reported as "eaten once a long time ago. All of it. But not now. Its hide was once sold
[114] also but now it isn't used at all." This conflicts with McGee's statement (McGee, 189:202) that there was a taboo on eating sea lions among the Seris and there is no way to reconcile the information.

[114] McGee's report may be as truthful as are the uncertain and hazy comments of the present day Indians.

224 On the other hand, the cougar belongs to a very dubious category, unless we can rely on Miguel Barnett's memory. All 4 of the younger informants emphatically deny that the cougar has ever been hunted for meat. But Miguel Barnett claimed that this has been done in the past, although he could not tell how long ago. Kroeber says nothing about this animal and this makes it difficult to date the events. At the time of Kroeber's visit, Miguel was at least 25 years old and the cougar could have been hunted either
[262] then or earlier. But today the Seris do not eat the flesh of the big cat and their abhorrence of it has been confirmed by the Mexicans to whom I talked about the subject, and who relish cougars' meat. This apparent distaste for the *el tigre's* flesh may
[178] well be a recent development quite unconnected with the lack of weapons. McGee (1894: *loc. cit.*) casually mentions that the Seris hunt both cougars
[411] and the jaguars but cites no evidence for it. Yet
[177] in his time Seris' almost only weapons were the bow and arrow and a lance which today has been replaced by firearms. I am unable to explain this contradictory behaviour.

262 Finally, there is the Ringtail cat or cácomistle. Although this beast has been reported as part of the diet, the information isn't too reliable. I had
[124] no way of checking whether this was the animal the Indians had in mind. Their description of it seemed to answer some other unspecified animal and their answers were confused. The fact is that the Ringtail cat does occur in the Seri territory and they are surely familiar with it.

Of the remaining 11 species none were ever mentioned by any of the informants as having been ever eaten. Their denial of eating the coyotes were most vehement. Coyote figures out probably

[P.98]

237 On the other hand, the hides of all of these three animals had been traded off to the Mexicans, [439] but this again was now discarded. This would [182] merely indicate the fluctuation of collapse of the demand from the outside rather than any intrinsic change in the Seri values.

Incidental use of the horns of the bighorn had been denied by all of the younger informants although admitted by Miguel Barnett. However, as I observed, the horns of this sheep are sometimes [415] used as drinking cups. Several of them were [181] lying around in the usual disorderly way of the Seris, now and then picked up for drinking and then again discarded. But the use of them struck me as most casual.

224 *Hunting:* Hunting takes a variety of forms 411 and includes a variety of weapons, from .22 caliber and .30/.30 caliber rifles to spear, stone and throwing stick. Bighorn and deer are followed on foot but without dogs, probably because without dogs they may be easier to surprise. This hunt takes place in daytime. But the peccary is hunted [231] with both the spear and the rifle and with a pack [885] of dogs, and only by the adult men. There is an emphasis on the "adult," this surely owing to the certain amount of danger connected with the chase of the peccaries. The weapons of the chase dwindle to the throwing stick or a stone when it comes to the jackrabbit. Badgers, I was told, are also killed with the same weapons. But formerly, the informants said, bow and arrow was much instrumental in hunting the smaller beasts.

* 825 Other animals, according to the Seris, are not [224] hunted now, nor had they been in the past. Justification for this ranged from the usual "because it isn't done" to the more specific reasons. The skunk is "neither hunted nor eaten because it [225] stinks." The whale is considered "too big to kill" while the killer whale is "too fierce." The harmless *tonita* (dolphin)[2] was reported somewhat hazily as "sometimes killed" but the comments were inconclusive and were denied by other informants.

[224] Two other species had been reported as hunted in the past but not at the present time. The Ringtail cat was supposedly hunted with the slings while the sea lion was hunted down "with a rifle [225] or rock but not with the harpoon because of its great strength, it would break the harpoon." This, however, was "perhaps 25 years ago." Why the sea lion is no longer pursued is uncertain, unless there is again a lack of demand from the outside while the Serian economy is so much centered on fishing.

●231 *Pets:* How many species of animals are kept as pets on and off is difficult to say. Like most hunting and gathering groups the Seris are fond of pets but their interest in them depends entirely on an accidental capture. Among the wild mammals of the region there are few that could be captured and tamed easily. The badger which I mentioned already was the only mammal I saw

[237] [2] I have seen bones of beached whales used for stools and
[352] also the skull of the *tonita* used as a chair. But it must be remembered that these animals got stranded on the beach. They were not deliberately hunted down.

1/2 Lie - deer, bighorn and peccary - Analyst]

231 which was kept around as a pet and it was interesting that the Indians who held it captive took considerable pains to look after it. This I noticed also with such few pet birds as they had. On the contrary, the large number of dogs which these Indians keep are left much to their own devices and are rarely fed. They are treated with lordly indifference and are treated as one Indian said to me "as you treat the dogs" which meant with a kick, stone and fist and forced to feed on the offal left on beaches. Yet, no Seri would ever think of deliberately killing a dog, unless drunk. Although there is obviously little use for the dogs, each family keeps many of them. Sometimes as many as a dozen of these miserable curs live in the compound of one Serian family. [273]

Taxonomy and Recognition

825 From the responses given, the Seri tend to split the mammals into two groups, the mammals proper and the group of animals which to them seem neither mammals nor fish. Evidently the possession of fur is of paramount importance here because it had been mentioned as a mammalian feature for several of the species. The Seri then put the *Cetacea* in a group of their own perhaps on these grounds. To be sure, the designation is somewhat hazy. The whale, the informants said, "is not fish nor mammal." The killer whale has also been referred to by them as a "whale-like animal." Finally, the dolphin one of the informants said was "like a shark. It lays eggs like a shark." But another informant thought it was "a mammal-like whale" although his response was obviously uncertain. That the presence of fur must be the main distinguishing feature is obvious in that they have no doubt about the mammalian position of the sea lion and that, while uncertain about the position of the bat, they are inclined to classify it with the mammals. As one informant put it "it can be of smilar kind to the coyote. It is not a bird because it has fur. Fur is not what the birds have."

Otherwise they are fairly good at the recognition of those individual species that are well known to them or that are frequently encountered in the area. The jaguar, called also *el tigre*, is known from hearsay only, owing to its extreme rarity in the immediate area of Desemboque. Porcupine is well recognized due to its peculiar features. But it must be rare and José Juan Moreno who saw it only once thought it was a "mammal." But he had no difficulty in recognizing a picture of it or associating the Spanish name *porcospino* with it. A somewhat moot point is the cacomistle. This animal evidently is not well known and, from the report, had been surely confused with some other creature. Finally, while the jaguarundi is surely found in the area it is also little known. Having to work with pictures I cannot in any way verify the Seri responses, especially since the picture used was not of the best kind for the identification purposes. A Mexican trader had a multilated skin of one, but he sold it to a visitor before I had time to query the informants about it. [124]

[P. 11 A]

262 pelicans are not; they are regarded as "bad food," unfit for eating. No further explanation has been offered here and it might be that the same sort of prejudice works here as in the case of the adult birds. Otherwise, reasons for rejecting eggs for food are probably a matter of mere customary attitude without any particular rationalization. In a few instances, the dove being one example, the eggs were said to have been rejected because they were "too small to bother."

237 Other economic uses made of the birds are ex-
271 tremely few. At one time, the pelican skins were used for clothing and, in fact, in McGee's time they represented, perhaps, the most important item of clothing for the Seris, having been worn in shape of wrap-around robes, usually covering the lower part of the body. Moreno reported these robes as still is use "30 years ago or more," in the early twenties, but in Kroeber's time these
[177] robes were already discarded in favor of the European garment. The Seri, nevertheless, still pre-
[439] serve skins of these birds—the white pelican, larger of the two, always had been favored here—and occasionally sell them to the visitors. Another
237 use made of the feather is in the arrows. The
411 cormorants, heron and the owls had been especially mentioned in this connection. But it is certain that they were not the only birds so exploited and also that this particular use went out of business along with the disappearance of the bow and arrow as the principal weapons. The use of feather for arrows may well continue into the present in a somewhat degraded form. The Seri boys play a
[857] great deal with bows and arrows, shooting them at any moving available target. They'll pick up any available feathers.

Pets

●231 Somewhat desultory use is made of birds as pets. During my visit I have seen doves and an egret kept in houses as pets by the adults and fed quite frequently. The number and variety of birds which may become pets in households may well
* 825 be larger. Pelicans and sea-gulls are less fortun-
857 ate. They are often shot at and over-powered by the boys. But instead of taking them to the households, the boys stage games, shooting them at point blank from bows and arrows and pea- shooters. These somewhat bloody executions take place almost every day. The pattern is the same. Only the subject of the game changes, depending on the available species of bird or animal.

Hunting

223 It is hard to speak of hunting in connection with birds, because there is so little effort made to go out and get them. The main exception is the duck and this, as I already mentioned, is hunted on Isla Patos and clobbered at night with sticks and stones in great numbers. This is one of the few instances in which the Seris will go out of their way to get a bird. Sea-gulls and cormorants and, more rarely, pelicans are dispatched by pea-
[411] shooter (stone), sticks, small clubs and, on occasion, with a shot from a .22 caliber rifle.

[P.18A]

262 them to their shelter and held them there for several days before they and their families finally ate them up. The turtles are also a well-liked item.

As already indicated in some instances there exists preference for a particular part of an animal. Of the Gila monster only the fat tail was said to have been eaten, and of both rattlers, the head and the tail are discarded on the grounds
* [825] that they contain toxin. Finally the toad and the gecko and *Xanthusia* are all rejected as completely venomous.

178 It is also evident that changes in the Seri
262 taste have occured in the course of the past several decades. Some animals are on their way out as food, and here we have the Gila monster, the whipcoach, the red racer and smaller lizards. In several cases, and this includes the Gila monster, the responses indicated that the animal had been eaten in the past. I also observed that on the sly, the Seris would eat them when other food was in short order. But they are reluctant to admit this and often altogether denied it.

Hunting

224 Most reptiles are captured by hand or else killed
[225] with a stick, stone or pea-shooter. Except for the turtles, the Seris will not make special expeditions. But it is certain that if they find themselves on any of the islands near the shores of Baja California they will go ashore deliberately in search of the chuckawalla.

225 The turtles are another matter. Here now, just as in the past, special expeditions are made in order to get them. These expeditions take place
[501] nowadays in the usual flat-bottomed plank boats, either motor or oar propelled. The hunt takes place only during unusually quiet and dark nights, when the Gulf is smooth and calm and there is neither wind nor ripple. With the slightest disturbance,
[354] turtle fishing is impossible. It is all done with the
[411] torch lights or Coleman lanterns. The principal and only weapon is the harpoon, identical with that described and illustrated by McGee. The turtles are then harpooned, dragged into the boat and either left alive, when the hunters have a sale of live ones in mind, or pounded to death with a
[251] club or oar, quartered and then either consumed on the spot or else dried and salted.[10]

[224] While the collecting of the smaller animals us-
[462] ually falls to the children or women, turtle hunting is men's job. Men, too, usually get the chuckawalla because they usually visit more distant islands.

Pets

● 231 None of the reptiles are pets in a real sense. Those few that might be kept are only held until the day when they are butchered and eaten. It is motivated more by the wish to preserve fresh food than by any affection for the animal. The turtles, the tortoises and the chuckawalla belong here. Occasionally a Seri boy will string a lizard, a *Scel-*

[10]The loggerhead is hunted in the daytime because, owing to its great strength, night hunt would be too dangerous. Two harpoons are always used on it, while for the smaller species, one harpoon usually suffices.

9:Malkin E-5 (1953-1955)1962 NU31 Seri NU31

●231 *oporus* or a *Cnemidophorus*, but even so, the life of the captive is short. Sooner or later it'll be slaughtered like any other beast played with by the Indian boy.

Taxonomy

* 825 In general the Seri recognize the major groupings of this class. Thus we have the lizards, snakes, turtles, sea turtles and toads. All these do correspond to the natural groupings with the sole exception of the horned toad. For some reason it is not classed together with the lizards but is supposed to be an entirely different animal. Some of the informants tend to keep the "vivoras," that is the rattlers, separate from the snakes but others think they are just a different kind of snake.

In distinguishing between one species and another, the Seris showed remarkable acuity. Out of 26 species listed here, they confused only two, both relatively small and similar looking Utas.[11] On the other hand, they were able to associate correctly specimens of the different sizes and often also colors of the same species. I frequently mixed up large number of specimens without telling them anything about them and yet invariably the informants were able to sort them out correctly.

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* 825

It is also interesting that, when I showed to Barnett and Moreno a specimen of a small toad I brought along pickled from Needles, California, they both identified it with the *B. alvarious*, the local toad.

* 825 Moreno also told me that there are two species of *Dipsosaurus* on San Esteban and the one I had was the smaller of the two. I am unable to check this information and it may be that what he had in mind was the larger chuckawalla. I have obtained information about the chuckawalla from other informants but not from him. There are no larger lizards in the area other than the chuckawalla and the Gila monster; therefore this suspicion is justified.

Sexing

All reptiles or amphibians, according to the Seri, do have the male and the female sex and in most cases highly specific traits in the two sexes of the same species were indicated. Actually sex differentiating data had been obtained for 23 out of 26 species. The three species for which no data on this are available were spotted race runner, western diamondback and the red racer. For the first two it may be an oversight on my part in the course of questioning. As for the red racer, the answer simply was "I don't know" or "I can't tell." It is possible that other individuals could have provided a more specific answer.

In general a multitude of criteria to differentiate the sex in the animals were employed; size, color pattern, presence or absence of specific structures all were used either individually or together. For 16 species the informants indicated either differences in size or similarity in size;

[11] Gecko and *Xantusia* go under identical Seri name, but, they say, they are different forms. However, they do separate the two racers, black and red variety, even if taxonomists today lump them as color forms of the same species.

9:Malkin E-5 (1953-1955)1962 NU31 Seri NU31

262 en simply because their flesh is disliked and unfit for human consumption. But it may also well be that some of them, especially of the giant variety, are not eaten simply because they are far too large to tackle and the Seris fear hunting them.

The Seris indicated also in some cases that larger specimens of fishes are eaten when they reach the size which would justify the effort. This is true of *Malacoctenus zonifer* which they indicated is "eaten when large," that is when at least 10 cm. long.

[226] Although only sometimes did the Seris specifically indicate that certain fishes are used for bait, it is very likely that almost all small or lesser fishes are so used.

262 178 In some cases the Indians indicated changes in preference for given fishes, with the time. For unexplained reason *Gymnothorax castaneus*, the morene, has been claimed to have been eaten in the past but not for the last 11 years. It isn't clear why the figure of 11 had been used and why suddenly in the early 40's they should stop eating it while the Mexican drool over it. But it may be also that here we have merely personal preference of the informants, as so often happens. As for the *pescara* it was formerly taken for food [439] but now it is merely sold to the Mexicans. This practice is increasing also to include the immense *mero*, even larger than the *pescara*. The fish is mainly sold but rarely eaten by the Seris themselves.

Food Preparation and Preferences

252 Food preparation is simple and in the main differs not at all from the preparation of other animal diet. The fish are either boiled whole or in part or else are roasted over slow fire on a grill. The entrails are usually discarded, but otherwise the beasts are eaten entire, eyes, brains and the rest, while the tiny fishlets are eaten complete with the scales and guts.

262 As for the preferences, as expected, there are some fishes that the Seri like better than others. The *bava* in the first place and the *pinto* in the second lead the list. The Seri prefer them to all others and consider them a real delicacy. On the other hand, there are some fishes that they'll eat only under protest, meaning when times are hard. *Girella simplicidens* is one such creature. The *Puereo* or *Cochi* is another. I have seen boat loads of puercos brought in with the other fish and un- ceremoniously dumped out on the beach to the [231] dogs. Literally! The Seris took to this fish only when fishing was poor during the wintry days when they were held ashore by the weather. Even [183] then, they tried to eat the despised creatures on the sly, avoiding being seen doing this, and when I or the Mexicans picked up fresh fish from the beach to take home they laughed saying that we acted as a *cochi* (pig) would!

Other Economic Uses

* 825 237 322 One use made of fish concerns two species of sharks, the *chato* and *camposo*. Here, the informants claimed, the oil from their liver had been used in earlier times for polishing wood. This is

[P. 32B]

9:Malkin E-5 (1953-1955)1963 MU31 Seri MU31

X

INSECTS AND ARACHNOIDS

Altogether information has been collected concerning 92 species of insects, scorpions, ticks, myriapods and arachnoids.

Economic uses

McGee says that "good many insects" are part of the Seri diet, although he does not specify just which they were nor how significant. There is no doubt that in his days, the insects played some role in the Seris' food and that they were probably far more important in the distant past, in the XVIII and early XIX centuries, before large flocks of livestock, horses and cattle of the Spanish rancheros offered excellent opportunities to supplement the usual diet.

Of all this but minor traces remain today. The Seris even have forgotten which insects had been eaten by their ancestors. Apart from the bees, only the Sphingid caterpillar has been indicated as "eaten in the past, but not now." As for the bees, their honey still is part of the Seri diet. But with the availability of sugar, even this addiction dwindles.

Other than this I have been unable to discover any uses whatever, except perhaps as playthings of little boys, with the usual torture in view. The *Cicada* is most significant of these, of which more later.

Pets

The only insect pet is a *Cicada*. This insect is usually tied to a long thread, its forewings partly clipped off and then released into the air like a kite. Local Mexicans also provide their own boys with a similar kind of toy.

Hunting

Only bees are hunted. They are usually flushed out of the cave shelters in the mountains. The operation is accomplished without the use of smoke. The honey is cut out with a knife.

Taxonomy

Seris' ideas of association of various insects are very loose. Few insects are recognized to form natural groupings; bees, butterflies, wasps, spiders are most distinct. However, there are all sorts of gradations blending confusedly with each other, often dependent on the knowledge and interest of particular informants.

Simple recognition is not always present. Out of 92 forms, 13 the informants could not identify, simply saying that they didn't know them. *Cicindela lemniscata*, *Melanotus cribricollis*, *Horistonotus*, *Meloid*, *Oxacis*, both species of *Cymatodera*, *Photopis*, *Scolopsella*, tiny Scarab, *Leptoremus*, *Homolocerus*, and *Reduviid*—all these were in the

9:Malkin E-5 (1953-1955)1962 NU31 Seri NU31

XI

SUMMARY

224 Hunting is very decidedly secondary to fishing, although it is still much practiced by certain individuals and in a desultory way probably by all.

462 There is a clean cut division of labor in all these occupations. Fishing and hunting are men's occupations, gathering of the desert animals and beachcombing for the intertidal animals is largely the job of women and children. Boys get broken [868] into men's occupations in adolescence, girls into women's jobs very much earlier.

224 Avoidance of fishing or hunting certain creatures appears much more a matter of custom than of well defined and socially rationalized attitude. Frequently an animal is not hunted simply because the Seri feel it is too big and too strong for them to tackle.

157 Through all these activities, Seri individualism is curiously woven and accounts for the failure of anything that might resemble a collective effort.

Food Preferences and Preparation

252 Seri food is prepared in a simplest sort of way. [263] Boiling in water is usual with salt and sometimes a few other spices added. While most food is prepared that way, snakes and fishes are usually fried, without any ingredients. There has been a [178] notable shift toward greater fanciness in the ingredients, as they have become more readily available.

262 There are many preferences. Animals are scaled in desirability. Some fishes, marine turtles, chuckawalla, deer and peccary and duck are at the top of the list; lower animals, smaller fishes including puerco in the middle, while the sea gull and the pelican are probably at the very bottom of the pit. This again reflects temporal changes in tastes [178] although not necessarily a direct influence from the Mexicans.

Pets

231 Few pets are kept, other than dogs. Such animals as come are those captured accidentally. In most cases they are bird nestlings.

Taxonomy

* 825 Differential criteria are applied in the classification of different groups. There is less tendency to group birds than to group different mammals and classificatory ideas break down almost completely in smaller animals, especially insects and molluscs. Considering the economic importance of the molluscs, poor ability to distinguish the Gastropods from the Pelecypods is striking.

The classificatory criteria differ for different groups. Mammals are generally recognized by the furiness, birds by the ability to fly and the pres-

[D·54 B]

123 handed to show their friendliness.

142 291 123 [302] [411] One was a young man with rather pleasant features, his braided hair hanging below his shoulders. His name was Antonio Herrera. The other was a wild-looking specimen called Ramon Blanco. His hair was a tangled mat with a short braid behind, suspicious black piercing eyes, long sparse moustache and chin-beard hiding a broad cruel mouth. He wore the remnants of an old sweater, a short dirty kilt, or skirt, nearly to his knees, a belt full of cartridges, mostly empty, and a long knife in a rawhide scabbard.

123 [745] [291] The young man had been baptized and given a name by Roberto, who had acted as godfather or *patrona*, many years ago. He wore a hat, jacket, and pants of blue denim, and *guaraches*, or sandals of rawhide.

We shook hands all around and then they called and halloed in the brush and soon three women and a lot of children, wild and half-clothed, filed into camp. The women were tall, gaunt, unkempt, ragged and barefooted, paying us not the slightest notice. They were bearing on their heads large baskets filled with all their earthly possessions---cooking ollas, scraps of cloth, pieces of turtle meat, bone [415] [482] [422] [854] [23] brads, hair brushes, and odds and ends. They carried, also, an infant or two wrapped in odd bits of rags. Several gaunt dogs followed in their wake.

342 [542] In all, three families came trailing in, removed their household equipment from their heads and resumed their interrupted and primitive housekeeping. Each family occupied its apartment in the row of brush shelters, separated from each other only by brush partitions with a total lack of privacy. These shelters, always open to the sea, serve as shade from the fierce rays of the sun, and also as windbreaks, but [561] are no protection from infrequent rains. They are occupied only for a brief period and then their nomadic tenants move on to fresh cahuesa, or sea turtle range.

123 [42] Soon, a third man arrived while we were near the huts, Manuel Encina. He was a man of sixty-five, gray hair and mustache, seamed features, and not evil looking. He was out of breath. He had gone for water to the same water hole where we had been yesterday, struck our tracks, had left his water cans and hurried back to warn his people. He was greatly relieved to find friends.

Since he had gone for water, inquiry revealed there had been no water in camp for two days, and six adults and one girl of thirteen and six children were thirsty. We gladly gave them one of our five-gallon cans of water and they were very grateful. They had caught a [225] [262] sea turtle the day before and gave us some turtle steaks which looked like beef or mutton.

312 487 123 As the camp was without water and we were running short, the young man and Encina offered to get some. Each took a *palanca*, or short shoulder pole with knotched ends, fitted empty five-gallon cans in

wear ceremonial feathers as did our western Indians. I saw no skin or cutaneous disease, or evidence of tuberculosis or of trachoma---the curse of our Indians.

One boy-child of five years was a handsome child---fat, round, sturdy, with roving great black eyes, large thick lips, a picture of perfect health. He was almost naked. His hair was done in a pigtail with a red string braided into it. His face like all the others was dirty, but he waded into the shallow water with a short spear and I saw him catch two crabs with his little harpoon. The water did not bother his face.

They had no plates or eating tools, except large deep clam shells, cast up by the sea, which served as cups and dippers. Their long, keen belt knives were used for cutting, carving or skinning, and always the fingers for eating. They gathered in a circle around an olla of seeds of long grass growing on the sea bottom prepared by winnowing, parching and grinding, and then cooked with turtle oil. Each one dipped his or her fingers into the olla and conveyed them to the mouth without losing a drop, and licked them off with great relish.

The dogs eat with the family. There were six or seven half-starved ones. If someone picked up a piece of turtle flipper the dog often took the first lick at it, bit off a piece or licked it before it reached the owner's mouth. The dogs were not punished. They were just slapped to keep them out of the pots.

We had a great time that evening in Seriland. The young man played his violin. This consisted of a hollow box cut out of a *palo verde* tree, and a piece of pine about sixteen inches long; terminating in a hollow where a single peg was fitted. The one string was twisted deer sinew, and the bridge was a small round clam shell at the far end. The bow was a small bent stick and some black horsehair. On the handle was a wad of rosin fastened underneath. By fingering this string a few weak squeaky notes were made, and this was the classical music of the Seris.

Manuel Encina seized his gourd rattle and began chanting. Herrera tapped a tin can and I beat on an inverted basket and the orchestra was in full swing. A young girl, Rosa, dragged out a turtle shell and standing on it began to dance. This dance consisted of stepping up and down quickly with each foot alternately, and this stamping, barefooted, emitted a hollow sound. Every once in a while I let out an Indian yell which pleased the Seris very much. For two hours they had a real swell time. We took one flashlight of the proceeding.

Each family was in their hut, which afforded very slight shelter as they were only partially roofed over and the sides were broken down in places. The huts were all adjoining and each had a little campfire, which did not give much illumination, so the dancing was in semi-darkness.

(text continues on p. 163)

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123 the flesh attached. This we roasted, or broiled, by standing it on
262 edge against two stakes in front of the fire. The breast was white and tender, somewhat like roast pig, but much more delicious.

242 The Seris cut off the great flippers, dug out the entrails, and
252 whenever there was a crack in the crowd of men, women and children, there was a dog lapping the blood and chewing a shred of meat before being driven off. Men, women and children tore off pieces of the tender
[251] meat and ate it raw. The blood which gathered in the hollow of the shell was baled out and saved in an olla.

A woman took out the coils of entrails, ripped them open with her finger, squeezed out the half-digested sea grass, which resembled closely-packed boiled greens, and rinsed them in the sea. The head
[251] was skillfully disjointed, and with flippers, entrails and liver, put up on the brush roof away from the sand and dogs.

Then began the feast; half the turtle being devoured immediately.
[244] To see Blanco, which name fits neither his complexion or character, gnaw the bone and tear away the raw flesh of a turtle flipper with his strong white teeth and cruel mouth, would not require much imagination to substitute the shin bone of a human being.

All parts of the sea turtle are utilized except the bones and portions of the head. The white, flexible under-shell is roasted and eaten, but how they can masticate and digest it is a mystery. I tried it and gave it up, as did all our party. It might have been a Goodyear tire, for all the impression we made on it, but even the Seri children
237 eat it. The carapace is broken into small pieces and dried out in an olla, and this yields a green oil. The shell is nearly one-half inch thick and filled with minute cells which carry oil. This oil is evidently a provision of nature to prevent barnacles and marine growths from attaching to the shell. This oil is poured into a previously cleaned section of intestine, fastened at one end, and then is bottled, ready for transportation or use.

The skin of the flippers is used for sandals. The broken pieces of carapace are also used for firing ollas. The shells are used for windbreaks, for receptacles for transporting household things on women's heads, and possibly for other needs. The stomachs are stretched, probably with sand, and when dried are used for transporting water, the same as we use a canteen.

185 The Seris are always improvident. They raise no cattle. They plant
261 nothing and the only crops they raise are children and dogs. They store no food away, eat when there is plenty, go hungry when there is
[231] nothing to eat. When they will eat raw turtle meat like animals, their
[234] taste is not refined. This is evidenced when they will eat a horse or
[262] burro dead, several days---scrape off the maggots to get a chance at it.

[123] gunwales, and then in trying to balance, she would dip the other way.

As we got to the point, the swells were larger and the danger so imminent we stopped the boat in lee of the point nearest Sonora, and Bob and I landed.

Old Blanco had paddled his *balsa* with some of the freight to the Sonora side. The boat put off again, and rode the sea better and it landed all right on Sonora side. In the meantime, several of the women and children, with their loads, had reached the Seri point ready to be ferried across. The boat returned with two Seris paddling. We loaded a lot of Indian junk, Bob and I and several children, the Chief and a woman. Nine in all. We reached the Sonora side, all right.

By this time breakfast had been cooked and we sat down to drink black coffee and eat rice and onions. The wild-looking Seris sat around us watching each mouthful, hungrily. When we finished we gave them all that was left and they cleaned it up.

[231] As we left the Seri point, and as their masters left, the dogs trotted to the water's edge and howled. Bob said that when all had crossed, the dogs would plunge in and swim across the swift current. [136] The water was infested with sharks, so it was possible that some of them would not reach shore. At last everybody got across, dogs and all.

[112] The Indians carried their packs; the men with the shoulder sticks and the women balancing their loads with marvelous dexterity on their heads. Two men packed twenty gallons of water in five-gallon cans.

When we had all our things in the boat, Juan Tomas jumped in with his pack. We were well loaded before, but this made us a little too deeply laden. Nevertheless, we pushed off and raised the sail to take advantage of the wind. We sailed parallel to the shore for a few miles until the waves got too overpowering and the boat had a lot of water in her. The mast was unstepped---a very delicate operation---and we made for the shore after shipping some of the waves.

My heart was in my mouth most of the time as each time the boat rolled, one side almost dipped up a wave. It was a matter of personal safety as well as safety of what few things I had already collected. One olla I had bought was smashed. The waves looked like clear green paint.

We finally landed without mishap and pulled the boat up, but it was so rocky we had great difficulty in walking in our bare feet. Our legs and feet were bare when we were in the boat and mine were badly scalded by the sun.

The Seris had made camp one quarter of a mile down the beach from us, and the old Chief shouldered his pack and strode down to them. We were very thankful.

[225] Soon some of the men came back to borrow the boat to hunt for

123 We were up long before the sun, the following day the eighth of
261 March, but the baking of bread delayed our breakfast, so that while we ate, forty Indians were looking on at us. Little ones with streaming hair and fluttering shirt tails, paddled over the sand hills as fast as their brown legs could carry them in their fear of being late. Women in patched and ragged skirts hurried and plowed through the sand and over thorny mesquite brush to be in time---for what? To see the *gringos* eat their breakfast and to possibly pick up a few crumbs. Each grain of corn, each bean, even a piece of dough half the size of a dime is precious and carefully garnered and eaten.

To eat under the devouring eyes of these people who rarely have enough to eat and most of the time not half enough, to see the hungry dog-like look as I tried to swallow a piece of bread, to see the children half start up as if to run and seize it and watch the mothers jerk them back, to see them eye hungrily our sacks of provisions and not dart to touch them, is enough to make one choke.

Any bread left over we broke into little chunks and gave to the children. I then gave each child two lumps of cube sugar. A little later, as they would hide their sugar and try to repeat, I lined up fifteen or twenty eager, frowsy bare-legged boys and girls and gave each an orange.

123 Later, the mother would trade a basket or a hair brush for an
439 orange, a knife for two oranges. They brought Pelican skin rugs made from six Pelican hides sewed together which used to form their kilts. For these I traded four yards of *manta*, or cotton goods, of which they made garments.

I soon had a thriving trade on hand, especially in necklaces. I had bought a few cheap glass bead necklaces at fifteen cents each. These set them wild. For native necklaces of seeds I traded the bead ones. I secured most of the necklaces, and when they ran out the children were sent by their mothers into the brush to gather more beans and seeds. These were hastily strung and hung around the neck and exposed to my admiring gaze, but it was useless as I would not trade any more beads. I had to save them for the Seris on the Island. I would have given everything away there.

Also, I had to consider the moral effect of them securing things without effort on their part. Only for service, must we pay in food or goods. For bringing food, water, to go hunting for us, or for trade---except giving things to the little children. It was heartbreaking, but they were lucky to have water. Like many others less primitive, they work, hunt, fish, only when hunger drives them.

231 With the people were a crowd of undersized, starved, bony dogs. A Seri cleans up everything and the dogs get the rest. Each day they are gnawing on some old fish head that is long past having any nourishment, and is tough and strong as rawhide, but hope springs eternal in an Indian dog's heart or stomach, and again and again, will they search out an old fish head or Pelican bone. Discouraged, never!

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Santo Blanco and Edward H. Davis - this hombre gambled away his only shirt - Sonora - 1929

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Seri method of carrying infant

123 Then Chico Romero and his load of children and dogs arrived and
484 he unloaded his impediments on the beach, and soon the women came walking along the beach and joined the party. The boats carrying the heavy things and children; the women, with their babies and a few light things on their heads, walk along the beach when possible and follow the boats, which hug the shore to avoid the strong currents and tide. The boats are propelled by paddles mostly, though some of
501 the Indians use oars. The women are slightly built, slender and in-
142 clined to be gaunt, owing to the hard life and lack of food. Their cheek bones are quite prominent and their profiles present protruding lips.

422 Having no permanent homes, moving hither and thither for their
[964] various food supply, household things are not accumulated and life is reduced to its very simplest elements and absolute necessities.

Crude baskets made from shoots of the torote tree, vessels in which to cook, and some patched rags in place of Pelican skins to serve as blankets to the fortunate few, constitute the family pos-
• 231 sessions. Strange to relate, many of the women have an over-supply of
[853] milk, and according to Roberto have puppies nurse what the babies cannot take. One woman was known to nurse a baby pig on one side and a puppy on the other.

[247] Family dogs lick all cooking vessels which is unnecessary as they
[854] are thoroughly clean when the Seris are through with them, and also lick the infants clean after performing their natural functions, so they are quite indispensable. I saw a Seri girl place on the sand a small can of water for a dog and then saw her drink some of the remainder and pour the rest back in a five-gallon can. Dogs frequently swim across the Infernillo to join their masters.

732 Asked about cripples and incompetents, Roberto said they probably did not exist. The conditions of survival were too precarious to admit of anyone living who was unable, by physical disability, to hunt or fish. There are two or three men who are nearly blind or so. The wives of these men eke an uncertain living for them by the hardest
262 struggle. The sea turtle is the staple; one man and one good boat can
433 secure a living for five families. There are now nine boats, but one
501 boat to a family would practically free them from continual want.
262 With the exception of four bones in the flippers and the bones of the
237 head, all the sea turtle is used---the meat, blood, entrails, shell which furnishes food and oil, skin of flippers which furnishes sandals, sinew for strings. Nothing is wasted except contents of the entrails.

123 Again, we laid our blankets on the clean white sand of the shore and were lulled to rest by the murmuring sea.

123 Daylight found us up the next morning, and we breakfasted, rolled
484 up our blankets, pushed the boats into the sea and were off by the time the sun rose over the mountains and shone over a glassy sea. Two Seris towed their boat by a tump line, while a boy of twelve steered

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the vessel to Guaymas. With the aid of a group of Yaqui, some of these women were said to have been permitted to go to Hermosillo and eventually to return to their home on Tiburon. Others of their group are said to have remained near Guaymas. The women who returned to Tiburon reported that the San Esteban women and children were put aboard another ship which sailed southward.

BANDS I, III, AND IV

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As opposition from the Papago and government forces increased, the members of Band I were forced to seek refuge on Tiburon Island. The mainland members of Band III (subdivisions 11 and 12) were also forced, especially during the Encinas Wars, to flee to Tiburon. There the combined forces of Bands I, III, and IV sought to cope with the military expeditions sent out through the years to exterminate them. Tiburon Island is an adverse battlefield for the uninitiated; some expeditions were turned back due to lack of potable water or because of failure to make contact with the enemy in the mountainous terrain. Some expeditions did encounter the Seri, however, and many natives were either killed or captured.

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Through the years, then, these military encounters, along with smallpox and measles epidemics, were responsible for reducing the Seri tribe to a small remnant. The band and clan systems lost their functional relevance as the people continued to live together for mutual protection. Shortly after the turn of the century, the expeditions and raids had practically ceased.

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SIGNIFICANCE OF BANDS TODAY

With the dissolution of the band system, the rule of descent shifted from patrilineal to bilateral, and the rule of residence shifted from patrilocal to neolocal.

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Although the substance of the band system is no longer a reality, the concept of land ownership still remains. A young Seri of today may choose to be associated with either the territory of his father or that of his mother. He is said to inherit part ownership of the area. It is recalled by one informant that in former times ownership of a mountain was especially important. Sometimes ownership of a mountain was included as part payment for a bride. Thus a person might 'own' a mountain in a subdivision other than his own.

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A custom exists even today whereby a person names his dog after a mountain or other geographical point located in his subdivision. Although the person may re-use the name, each dog so named must be of the same sex as the first.